

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4866

INFO AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY MEXICO

UNCLAS GUATEMALA 1014

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: GT, ES, PROP

SUBJ: GUATEMALAN PRESS COVERAGE OF SALVADORAN ELECTION

1. IMPORTANCE GIVEN BY PRESIDENT CARTER TO HUMAN RIGHTS HAS LED GUATEMALAN PRESS TO FOCUS ON ADMINISTRATION'S ATTITUDE TOWARD FEB. 20 ELECTIONS IN SALVADOR. FOR EXAMPLE, RESPECTED IMPARCIAL BANNERLINED ACROSS TOP OF FRONT PAGE FEBRUARY 15, "PERSPECTIVE IN EL SALVADOR: FRAUD WOULD MEAN CHAOS," AND STORY BY ITS CORRESPONDENT BEGAN, "THE EYES AND EARS OF NEARLY FIVE MILLION SALVADORANS ARE TURNED TO THE NEW PRESIDENT OF THE US... AS THE ELECTIONS FOR PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT SCHEDULED FOR NEXT SUNDAY APPROACH, POLITICAL AND MILITARY LEADERS CONSIDER THAT THE FIRST TEST OF FIRE FOR PRESIDENT CARTER IN FOREIGN POLICY WILL BE (HIS DECISION) TO SUPPORT OR REJECT THE ALLEGED FRAUD DENOUNCED BY THE NATIONAL OPPOSITION UNION...." INDEPENDENT GRAFICO'S EDITORIAL FEBRUARY 15 LISTS THREE PRIORITY ITEMS ON LATIN AMERICAN POLICY AGENDA OF CARTER ADMINISTRATION: PANAMA CANAL, CUBA, AND "ENCOURAGING UNCLASSIFIED

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DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES IN THE HEMISPHERE, SO SEVERELY DETERIORATED IN THE LAST DECADE. TO THAT END, THE US WILL KEEP A WATCHFUL EYE ON THE ELECTIONS THAT ARE DRAWING NEAR.... THE DEMOCRATIC FORCES OF THE HEMISPHERE LOOK FAVORABLY ON THIS NEW ATTITUDE IN WASHINGTON." TWO OTHER NEWSPAPERS CARRIED PHOTOS OF SALVADORAN CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC LEADER JOSE NAPOLEON

DUARTE MEETING VICE PRESIDENT MONDALE AND SENATOR KENNEDY RESPECTIVELY. ONE PAPER ALSO CLAIMED THAT DUARTE HAD MET PRESIDENT CARTER EARLIER THIS MONTH.

2. HOWEVER, THERE HAVE ALSO BEEN TWO EDITORIALS CRITICAL OF THOSE WHO ARE LOOKING TO WASHINGTON TO ENSURE THAT A FREE AND FAIR ELECTION TAKES PLACE. ONE EDITORIAL IN PRO-GOVERNMENT NACION SAYS THAT FOR TWO CENTURIES THE COUNTRIES OF LATIN AMERICA HAVE FOUGHT FOR THEIR INDEPENDENCE, FIRST FROM SPAIN AND THEN FROM THE US. "THEREFORE, IT COMES AS A CRUEL AND DISGRACEFUL HISTORICAL AND MORAL REGRESSION THAT THERE ARE POLITICIANS IN SALVADOR THAT CALL UPON MR. CARTER TO INTERVENE IN ELECTIONS OF A COUNTRY NOT THEIR OWN. IT IS ALSO HUMILIATING FOR LATIN PRIDE THAT THERE ARE POLITICIANS THAT PLACE THEIR TRUST IN FOREIGN INTERVENTION TO DECIDE A QUESTION OF NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY THAT IS THE PRIVATE CONCERN OF THE PEOPLE OF SALVADOR. IF THERE IS A TRAP, FRAUD, OR TRICKERY IN THE ELECTION THE PARTIES HAVE THE ELECTORAL AND ALSO THE ARMED ROUTES TO MAKE THEIR WILL RESPECTED. BUT TO ASK THAT CARTER INTERVENE IN A QUESTION OF SOVEREIGNTY AND INDEPENDENCE IS OFFENSIVE TO THE DIGNITY OF THE SALVADORAN PEOPLE."

3. COMMENT: WITH THEIR OWN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS LESS THAN 13 MONTHS AWAY AND MEMORIES OF THE 1974 ELECTIONS STILL VERY FRESH, GUATEMALANS WILL BE LOOKING VERY CAREFULLY AT HOW THE US REACTS TO THE ELECTION,
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PARTICULARLY IF THERE ARE CREDIBLE ACCUSATIONS OF FRAUD.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
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Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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